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How to homeschool your children

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In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful



Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you
in good health and imaan.

On behalf of our AMAU Academy team, we would like
to present to you these compiled notes that we have
prepared to make your journey with us a lot easier.

Our notes are compiled by the AMAU Admin team
and have not been comprehensively checked
by a teacher.

If you find any errors or corrections that need
to be made, kindly inform us via our email
helpdesk@amauacademy.com

May Allah make our paths toward seeking
beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts
with sincerity and gratefulness
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran



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Glossary

جل جلاله Allah the Most Exalted	جل جلاله Jalla Jalāluhu
صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him	صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم Sallāllāhu Alayhi Wa Sallam



Why Homeschool?

Chapter One

This is one of the most common questions that parents ask as more of them are starting to consider homeschooling. Homeschooling is a big blessing because of the Fitān we are surrounded by in our times.

As a Muslim, we are told that we are responsible for our children's education. The Prophet ﷺ told us:



أَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

"Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock."

Sahīh al-Bukhārī 7138, Sahīh Muslim 1829

The Prophet ﷺ also said:



إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمْلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةِ... أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ

"When the human being dies, his deeds end except for three...or a righteous child who prays for him."

Sahīh Muslim 1631

These narrations show that one has a huge responsibility to take care of their children and making sure that they grow up with the right Tarbiya. These narrations also show that investing in one's children is not only for this world but for the grave and the Hereafter. Moreover, this also shows the responsibility of a parent irrespective of whether the children are being homeschooled or are being sent to public schools. Hence, one should strive their best in order to fulfil that responsibility.

The Dangers of School

Chapter Two

1 Curriculum

The problems with the modern-day curricula are many. They contain topics which can lead to disbelief, such as Darwin's Theory of Evolution, immorality, and relationships outside of marriage. Some countries have adopted these curricula, and they teach them to five-year-olds. Some other examples of problems in the curriculum design include questioning parents and the authority and not obeying them, and questioning one's religion which ultimately leads to Atheism. Similarly, Islamic schools have issues too, such as having a weak curriculum, poor standard of teaching, etc.

2 Environment

The school environment has a lot of issues which must be pointed out. The language used, the people the children are around, the Haram activities they observe day-to-day, and many more. It is our responsibility to protect our children as much as possible.

1

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ إِيمَنُوا قُوْمٌ وَأَهْلِيْكُمْ نَارًا وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَئِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَغْصُونَ اللَّهُ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمِرُونَ

O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allāh in what He commands them but do what they are commanded.

Surah At-Tahrim 6

3 Teachers

Teachers play a major role in the life of the children irrespective of how good the curriculum is. This is especially true in non-Muslim countries where the majority of teachers are non-Muslims which is concerning. The way the teacher dresses, behaves, and the words they use will have a major impact on the children. The teachers are the ones whom the kids see the most after their family, hence they play a role in moulding them whether it is for good or bad. So, it is highly important to pay heed to this matter.

4 Students

Children are vulnerable and the people they are around has a major impact on them. If an Islamic school has a great curriculum and good teachers but the students are not raised properly, the purpose of having such amenities is defeated because friends play a crucial role in the behaviour of one's children.

5 Bullying

Bullying is really common in every school despite their measures to have anti-bullying laws. Due to this, children feel pressured, embarrassed and have other bad experiences. Homeschooling can completely eliminate bullying.

6 Teachers

In many schools, children are not able to practice Islam freely. They might not be able to wear the Hijab, have separations between the boys and girls, and the ability to pray their obligatory prayers.

It is upon the parent to make sure the child grows up with a righteous upbringing. Homeschooling does not have these issues as you are the one who is in control.

Reasons to Consider Homeschooling - Part 1

Chapter Three

FLEXIBILITY

One of the major reasons why people should consider homeschooling is flexibility. It gives the parents the ability to control what their kids study, the subjects to add or delete, to try out different things outside of the curriculum, the ability to travel without the school being disturbed, the ability to live in a Muslim country since the schooling is completely done at home, and more.

One can also have the flexibility to change times according to what suits them and their children the most. This is because the children can study in the times they are active and focused, which can lead to an increase in productivity, which results in better results. This is not something everyone can do as it depends on the circumstances of the family, but it is a very powerful tool. Moreover, thanks to homeschooling, people are not bound by school holidays. For example, parents can use the school holidays and mid-term timings to go out on a break.

One of the greatest aspects of flexibility is making Islam a part of homeschooling and giving it the utmost priority. Studying Islam these days is being neglected in Islamic schools and even though there are options like Madrasas and weekend classes, making Islam a core part of the education is something very few parents are doing in this day and age. One can actually make learning Islam the most important aspect of education through homeschooling.

Another advantage is the flexibility to conduct exams when it's the right time for the children and not for the school. The school is not to blame for this as they have to keep in mind the rules and regulations of the education board. However, when homeschooling, parents have the option to have the children take the exams whenever they are ready.

Parents also have the flexibility to stop homeschooling if they want to. If the parents feel that it is not for their kids, they can always take them back to school.

Reasons to Consider Homeschooling - Part 2

Chapter Four

HIGHER STANDARD OF EDUCATION 1

One of the benefits of homeschooling is a higher standard of education which is customised for your child. Many schools are really there to provide daycare for children and they do that to a certain standard. They obviously look after the children while their parents go to work, but they are not tailored to every child's needs. With homeschooling, the subjects, the teachers, the times and all other aspects can be made perfectly tailored for the child.

Children have unique talents but they are suppressed by an educational system that values conformity over everything. On the other hand, homeschooling can provide one-on-one personalised training without the waste of time that comes with schools. There are many examples wherein homeschooled kids were able to outperform those who were in school.

PERSONALISED EDUCATION SYSTEM 2

People value private expensive schools because the size of the class is smaller, the teacher is able to give more attention to each kid, and they focus on developing the unique talents each kid has. In homeschooling, the size of the class is the smallest, the kid(s) gets one-on-one personalised attention, and there is the flexibility to bring out the hidden talents of the children because there is ample time and resources.

BETTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR CHILDREN 3

From the benefits of homeschooling is to have better relationships with your children. You learn together and you offer Tarbiyah to them rather than just education and this is important as it develops a better relationship with your children.

Education is about imparting knowledge to people, but Tarbiyah is about nurturing them, looking at what's right for them, caring for them, developing them, and many more aspects. Very few schools offer a strong Tarbiyah program where the child is nurtured and taken care of. The Tarbiyah a child gets from their parents is different and is quite rare in schools. It might not be completely absent because there are some great teachers who really take care of the children, but this is an exception rather than the norm.

Another reason why you should homeschool is to develop the mentality that learning should be a lifelong habit which is fun. There are some good schools and there are children who enjoy their school, but generally speaking, school is pretty much akin to torture for a lot of kids. At home, learning becomes fun.



Reasons to Consider Homeschooling - Part 3

Chapter Five

BUILDING THE HABIT OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING

1

Building the habit of independent learning is important because the further you go in education, the more you have to learn independently and having this skill is one of the major advantages of homeschooling. This skill is the reason why home-educated children often excel later on in life e.g. getting accepted into top universities, getting good job, etc. With the right Tarbiyah and with time, children learn how to work by themselves and parents can be confident that their children can do their work independently. They learn how to work according to a timetable and they learn how to take responsibility.

ABILITY TO ADAPT TO THE QUICK CHANGES OF THE WORLD

2

Another reason for us to be homeschooling our children is that the world is changing in terms of employment and opportunities. Schools take a long time to catch up and the world is changing rapidly. We are seeing a massive increase in certain jobs and fields and decreases in others. We have also been seeing the office jobs change to Work From Home [WFH] jobs within a small period of time. We also see people switch a lot of between careers to gain what they need in terms of wealth and quality of work. Similarly, a lot of people are studying many career streams at the same time. Schools take a very long time to catch up and they're very averse to changes. Homeschoolers have the ability to change and adapt to the system easily and this is a major advantage

HOMESCHOOLING SAVES MONEY

3

Homeschooling children saves up a lot of money which can then be invested in one's children. The amount of money one can save when homeschooling is immense. Be it school uniforms, taxes, books, school meals, transport, school trips, equipment, and many more. Even if one has external tutors, one can still save a lot of money. In summary, homeschooling has better quality personalised education and still has the advantage of saving money, making it the most economical way of schooling.

HAVING GOOD SUPPORT NETWORKS

4

Another reason for homeschooling is having great support networks. One can meet like-minded parents from all over the world. There are a number of Telegram, Whatsapp, Facebook, and other social media groups wherein parents from all over the world can connect with other parents. These groups can also be found locally and one can easily collaborate and take ideas from other parents. This element makes homeschooling even more refined, enjoyable and flexible.

Drawbacks of Homeschooling - Part 1

Chapter Six

So what about the drawbacks of homeschooling or the perceived negatives of homeschooling because ultimately, we believe that homeschooling is not for everybody and there are some things to bear in mind before one embarks on this journey.

1 ● **LEGAL RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION**

The first and most difficult of all, are issues regarding legal recognition and certification. This has two aspects to it. First of all, getting legal recognition that your child is studying and you are teaching your child. This is really easy in some countries, quite difficult in others, and near impossible in the rest. It is not impossible anywhere because parents are homeschooling in nearly every country including countries that provide no legal recognition for homeschooling at all. Generally speaking, this is the first issue that people come across as most people want their children to be certified; they want them to have some kind of accredited qualification at the end of their home education.

This is where the support networks come in handy as asking people who currently homeschool their children in a particular country can clear most of the misconceptions. For example, some people say that it is impossible to do homeschooling in the UK but in reality, it is easy and there are no issues with the certification.

Secondly, coming to the legal issues. If the country completely bans homeschooling, the best option is to either leave the country or find an alternative. There aren't many countries in the world in which homeschooling is completely illegal; there are countries which highly discourage it but others are completely okay with it. This is why parents must do research in regards to what they need to do before they start homeschooling.

For example, some people come from a country where they are allowed to home educate, but they can't get qualified. So they put their qualification in the UK (you don't actually have to be physically in UK, there are institutes around the world that do these exams) because those exams are open to anybody, and they get a qualification that says they are UK qualified from a UK school that is accredited. Similar options are available in Canada. In the U.S., there is an option that one can enter from a different country and sit the exams in it.

Drawbacks of Homeschooling - Part 2

Chapter Seven

1 ● SOCIAL INTERACTION

From the perceived drawbacks is the issue of social interaction. In fact, this is the first drawback mentioned by people who know nothing about homeschooling. This is absolutely not true. Social interactions in school are often more harmful than beneficial from an Islamic point of view. How many social interactions in school would you say are Islamically beneficial? There's a lot of peer pressure, encouragement to do Haram, free mixing, and many more serious issues.

Even if we say that the school has beneficial social skills that children learn, one can learn these social skills even if the children are homeschooled as there are many alternatives. For example, the Masajid are a place for the children to interact and make good friends who are practising. Apart from that, there are many after school clubs, sports clubs, and more.

In Islam, one should be connected with the seniors of the religion like the scholars and the students of knowledge. For example, the mother of Imam Malik sent him to Rabi'ah to learn manners. The older generations used to learn their manners from their seniors i.e. the 'ulama and the senior students of knowledge. Hence kids getting less social interaction when they are homeschooled is a myth and a weak argument.

2 ● TEAMWORK

Another perceived drawback with homeschooling is teamwork.

This can be difficult if there is only a single child or children with a large age gap between them. Teamwork teaches things like leadership, sharing, and listening to ideas. People who criticise homeschooling bring a valid point of it lacking group work. This affects people who have a single child, because they do not have another kid to team up with and do the activities which require collaboration.

Parents can try to link up their children with other homeschooled children via groups or clubs. However, if this is not possible, then the parent has to take up the role of the other child. In summary, this might be a genuine drawback and it needs to be thought about. The best solution for this to get access to the local or international homeschooling groups or forums and socialise with other homeschooling parents to tackle this issue.

Drawbacks of Homeschooling - Part 3

Chapter Eight

10 IMPOSTER SYNDROME

From the perceived drawbacks to homeschooling is feeling like you aren't well educated enough to teach the kids and this is a valid concern to a certain extent. However, one needs to balance this out with the other benefits. Parents need to realise at what age the child might need a skilled teacher, but that should not stop them from beginning the homeschooling journey. From experience, this is not required until the high school level realistically speaking.

The high school level is called general qualifications. That's why in the UK they call it the General Certificate of Secondary Education. It basically covers general knowledge and basic skills. There shouldn't be an issue for parents to teach their children until the age of 13 or 14. One more thing to note is that the world has changed rapidly and we have experts from all around the world teaching high-quality education for free on platforms like YouTube and Khan Academy. We also have access to highly qualified online tutors who teach for a very small fee. Moreover, it's not true that the children need a highly qualified teacher for everything; they might understand some topics by themselves without any aid. An example where the child needs a tutor is if he's learning a language that the parent does not know.

Moving on, the requirements to do very well in exams up to the high school level are very low. Hence, we don't see that to be a major problem. However, the less the parent knows, the more likely it is that they have to involve other people. This can be seen as a joint learning experience with the children. Parents also need to remember that it is not only about knowledge, but also Tarbiyah. Nobody is more qualified to give better Tarbiyah to one's children than the parents.

Drawbacks of Homeschooling - Part 4

Chapter Nine

1 ● LACK OF TIME

The other genuine concern people have is feeling like they don't have time to teach their children. This is actually unlikely to be true because they don't have to teach their children 9-5 just because these are the timings of the school. They can teach in the times both the kids and the parents are comfortable. The parents need to experiment with the timings and at the end, need to follow a pattern in order to maintain uniformity. The parents can also bring in online tutors as discussed earlier to solve this problem and there are other alternatives as well. Most importantly, the parents need to be committed to their children's education and their wellbeing because they are an Amanah and they will be questioned about their children on the Day of Judgement.

2 ● MISBEHAVING KIDS

Homeschooling has its disadvantages, and one of the most common complaints is that the children are not well behaved at home. It will take time to overcome the problem of children misbehaving at home while being well behaved outside or in the classroom. This simply requires time and the parents need to nurture them, pay attention to them, and work with them. The results of this can be seen in the kids behaviour as they need the right attention and Tarbiyah.

3 ● UNSTABLE LIFE AT HOME

Children feel trapped if life at home isn't stable. This can lead to the children feeling unstable. There are many single parents who homeschool their children and they have an amazing home life. It's not about whether the mother and father are together, rather it's about making the home a place of tranquillity and peace. The parents can always go outside to a park or a library for concentration, but the home issues need to be sorted in the end. There is nothing wrong with changing the environment from time to time as long as it is permissible according to Islam.

Homeschooling is not for every single parent but a lot of the drawbacks either have solutions, or they are not actually drawbacks in the first place. Finally, everything valuable in life has challenges. If one is aware of the challenges and they prepare for it, by the Will of Allāh, they will be granted success.

Allāh ﷺ said:

1

فَلَا اقْتَحِمُ الْعَقَبَةَ

“If only they had attempted the challenging path!”

Surah Al-Balad: 11

Things to Consider Before Homeschooling - Part 1

Chapter Ten

This is the stage just before the parent is actually ready to homeschool the child. Mentioned below are some things that one should consider before homeschooling.

1 Legal Requirements

The most important matter when it comes to paying attention to the legal requirements is that the parents should make sure that they are not breaking the law. They need to know what the country says about homeschooling, the flexibility given, and other aspects discussed in the series. In the UK, the law as it stands at the time of making this video is that you are obliged to give your children an education. However, you are not obliged to cover certain subjects or topics. The typical number of hours that a child should be educated in a week in the UK is somewhere in the region of 20 to 25 hours. The UK is extremely flexible in that regard because it doesn't stipulate a particular curriculum, but it's worth knowing what the law says.

Homeschoolers need to understand what the law is at their country, state, regional, and local levels. Sometimes the inspectors and support staff don't know the legal requirements themselves. Parents need to contact people who are already homeschooling and find out what they're allowed to do.

The law is pretty simple in regards to the UK; children need to be educated and parents should be able to demonstrate that in case an inspector comes to check in. So it is better to do all the research about the legal requirements of one's particular country before proceeding further.



Things to Consider Before Homeschooling - Part 2

Chapter Eleven

1 Curriculum

Once you get the legal thing in your mind, the next question is, which curriculum? This is a beautiful thing to think about and it's not stressful at all as you have curricula from all over the world; you can choose whichever you like. For example, the British national curriculum is the standard for people who sit for exams in the UK. We can broadly follow the curriculum and take out anything that goes against the religion of Islam. The curriculum can also be used as a backup guide so that the children are in line with the regular kids incase the parents decide to stop homeschooling for some time or to drop it completely.

In the UK curriculum, children can take UK exams in nearly every country around the world. Parents have the ability to follow the UK curriculum as a rough marker of where the children should be at each level, but they can easily add or remove subjects that go against Islam. For example, for religious studies or languages, the parents can pick the Saudi national curriculum. It makes sense to have something that is established that the parents and children can follow. It's also worth noting that there are specialised curricula that are made to check all the requirements of the parents. There are also many websites that offer curricula for very little fees. It is up to the parents to choose what they want their children to be qualified for and what steps they need to take in order to reach that goal. Finally, the option to take gap years is also available for the students.

Things to Consider Before Homeschooling - Part 3

Chapter Twelve

1 Identify any other concerns

Before starting, it is better to identify any other concerns one may have and the answers to those questions. One should do their research about what parents who homeschool their children are saying about it. Homeschooling teaches us that there are problems and our job is to find solutions. These issues might be related to work, child care, support from family members, and others.

It is highly recommended that the parents speak to other parents who homeschool their children, and if possible, the teachers who are teaching at schools. Regarding the latter, parents must also note that these teachers have to be teachers who are known to the parents. This is because teachers are sometimes pessimistic about homeschooling. Interestingly, there are teachers who teach at schools yet they homeschool their own children.

Along the same lines, Christians have been homeschooling in the modern age for a long period of time, so parents can look at the various methods they use. It needs to be pointed out that parents need to be careful to not adapt everything they do, but the things in which there is a shared ground.



Things to Consider Before Homeschooling - Part 4

Chapter Thirteen

1 Transition from existing school

The transition from the existing school to homeschooling needs to be done with wisdom and insight. Parents need to make sure that they do not burn the bridges between them and the school authority. Speaking to other people who were in the same situation opens up a world of new ideas on how to easily transition without causing harm to either of the parties. However, if the parents think that their child is being harmed in school in terms of ethics and religious aspects, they should act quickly.

Shifting to homeschooling gradually rather than rushing is the better approach. The parents should find out what the right steps to take are. For example, do they have to register with the local authority that their child is being homeschooled? If that is the case, then there are templates that are already made so they don't have to be scared about what to write; there are beautiful templates that are really easy to use. As a side note, it may be necessary to quote the law if the school is very antagonistic towards the children being taken out of school. Parents can quote the law as it is in the template itself. This transition will take time but it will be worth it.

Do's and Don'ts

- Part 1

Chapter Fourteen

Don't replicate school at home



One of the main pieces of advice in homeschooling is not to replicate school at home. If the exact copy of school is made at home, the parents lose all the homeschooling advantages they have like flexibility, Tarbiyah, personalised one-on-one learning, and much more; the advantages of homeschooling are based on its flexibility and the parents need to capitalise on this. It is fine for the parents who feel lost to replicate the school in the beginning, but if they have the elements of the classroom like a desk, whiteboard, periods of 40 minutes and so on, then the advantages are lost.

Do make school different to the regular home routine



This is part of the problem of children who struggle to adapt to learning from home and the reason is that they feel the home environment as a day off and not like school. It is up to the parents to make schooling look different and at the same time find the sweet balance between both. For example, changing from the uniform and getting dressed in good clothes, changing the room and environment, and having a specific desk for studying purposes. The parents need to experiment with their children and try to find the right balance.

Do's and Don'ts

- Part 2

Chapter Fifteen

Invest in a high-quality printer



One of the best things parents can invest in is a high-quality printer that doesn't cost too much to run. Usually with printers, people look at the original price of buying which might be cheaper than usual, but parents need to keep in mind that they will be printing 25-30 papers per child on a regular basis.

Invest in good stationary



Buying good quality stationery can make the children excited for school and it does not have to be every type of item out there. The basic requirement is that it should make school fun. It is also a good idea to get craft materials if the children work on crafting.

Don't spend excess (basic materials)



Don't spend too much because the items will likely change and improve over time. Have a well-stocked stationery with plenty of paper, and the usual instruments like rulers, compasses, etc. Definitely try to have a reasonable amount of resources. If there are special items required such as those used in science experiments, they can easily be bought from a nearby stationery. Spending on good quality items once is way better and more economical than buying materials from time to time. Choose the best based on availability and capital.

Do's and Don'ts

- Part 3

Chapter Sixteen

Adapt and change as much as required



Adapt and change as much as you need to take advantage of the flexibility of homeschooling. Don't be frightened to make changes. Chopping and changing all the time is an important part of a homeschooling routine. You also need to be flexible in regards to taking holidays. Planning and changing accordingly can save a lot of time in the future.

For example, you can take holidays when everyone else is at school as you have the flexibility. A major advantage is whenever the kids get a holiday, they tend to focus more after the break as they are refreshed and parents will be able to observe an increase in productivity. This change does not affect the progress of the child because the fundamentals are kept constant, while the method of implementation changes. Hence one should not be afraid to experiment and adapt to different challenges.

Don't expect thing to be perfect right away



Homeschooling is a long-term investment; you have a lot to learn. It doesn't matter if you mess up for a few months and don't do a great job. You're going to learn and get better at it by the Will of Allah.

Do's and Don'ts

- Part 4

Chapter Seventeen

Make education interesting and fun



Do make education interesting, fun, and relevant because a good portion of schooling is completely irrelevant. Islam is what the previous people gave their main attention to and then they took what they needed from the worldly sciences. Nowadays we study worldly sciences for the sake of things we never actually use.

Many times, the Islamic aspect of history is just written up. The UK national curriculum does at times cover historical events that involve Muslims, but Muslims play no part in any of it. This is a topic where you can actually make Islam more relevant to the child. Moreover, if you feel like the subject is really dry, you can make it more interesting; a trip to the shops can be just as beneficial as a maths lesson. Take advantage of everything that's around you and don't be frightened to build your lesson upon real-world practical situations.

Don't wear yourself and your children out and don't be too relaxed



Don't wear yourself or your children out and don't be too relaxed that homeschooling turns into a holiday. Strike a balance between these two aspects and do not let the kids get stressed. Give them ample amount of breaks from time to time.

Don't feel you have to do everything by yourself



Don't feel that you have to do everything by yourself. Tutors online and in-person, Masajid, community centres, extracurricular activities, and self-learning can be used to aid you. There are many people who can support your child and an example of that is your local Masjid as mentioned prior.

Don't be afraid to ask for help



Don't be afraid to ask for help as everyone is deficient; asking for help can open a lot of doors. This help can come from anyone be it the homeschooling forums, Masajid, friends and family, and more.

Make education interesting and fun



Don't listen to people who don't know anything about homeschooling. At the end of the day, it's like the poet said in the famous lines of poetry.

علوماً ليس يدرىهن سهل

أتانا أن سهلاً ذم جهلاً

ولكن الرضا بالجهل سهل

علوماً لو دراها ما قلاتها

It has come to us that Sahl criticised without knowledge; types of knowledge that Sahl did not know.

knowledge, which if he knew, he would not hate; but being pleased with ignorance is Sahl (easy).

Share work among family



Do share the work among the family, especially with spouses, and even siblings, neighbours, and friends. Make sure that the workload is not being put on a single person.

Share work among other people



Share the work that you do with other people and try to help others do the same, because there is no doubt as the Prophet ﷺ said:

1

"وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنَى الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنَى أَخِيهِ"

"Allāh helps the servant as long as he helps his brother."

Sahīh Muslim 2699

So share what you've learnt and be someone who gives back to the community.

Appropriate Approaches at Appropriate Times - Part 1

Chapter Eighteen

When talking about homeschooling it's really important to talk about the topic of having different approaches at different stages. One of the worst things one can do is to disregard the flexibility aspect of homeschooling and copy exactly what the school does.

1

NURSERY

This is the age where people usually call it Nursery. This is the age where there are no hard and fast rules. This is also the age where the child can learn a lot quicker as they are very active in trying to learn new things. One should focus on making the studying playful and enjoyable for the children without losing the actual structure. There are a lot of different techniques one can use to get the most out of their child. Parents should also try to give a wide variety of experiences to their children and to keep track of what and how they are doing.

Parents should also look at what age the children should be able to read the alphabet, read basic words, and count numbers using their fingers and without. These should be taught to the children in a way that is enjoyable to them. There is no need to buy textbooks at this age but parents can buy a set of reading books such as the Oxford Reading Tree. Parents can find these online for free and also through second-hand copies.

One aspect a lot of people miss out on at this age is including the Arabic language as a part of the child's life and this is the best age to do it. It is a lot easier when parents start this online for the child early, and it is a good idea to make Arabic their private language. There is no need to follow a specific curriculum at this age; repeat whatever is being done for English in Arabic. Parents can also look for a private tutor to teach their kids Arabic. There are a lot of resources online which should be researched and used appropriately by the parents.



Appropriate Approaches at Appropriate Times - Part 2

Chapter Nineteen

2**PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL**

This is the age where formal schooling begins and the age range can be from 6-11 years old depending on the country and system. As home educators, parents are not obliged to stick to a set of rules. Instead, they can progress beyond the scope of formal schooling. It is easy for most parents to teach at the primary level without any hassle. If they feel that they lost track of these subjects, the internet is full of resources that can help brush up their knowledge.

As for textbooks, this depends on the curriculum the parents choose. If the curriculum does not conduct exams very often, the parents do not have to be worried about textbooks. At this age, there are a lot of resources available online to teach the children and strengthen their base. It is good to have the curriculum close by to use it as a guide, but parents should use the flexibility of homeschooling to add or delete things from the curriculum according to their preferences. There are also a number of books which are available on Amazon which have fun exercises and activities and they have the answers printed on the back. These types of books are available for kids of all age groups. Adding these in makes learning a lot more enjoyable.

Along the same lines, homeschooling is a lot more efficient and so parents always have extra time in hand. Some parents want their children to go beyond their regular curriculum and that is okay. This can be handy if the parents are planning to send their kids back to school after a period of time so that the children are on the same level as the regular kids.



Appropriate Approaches at Appropriate Times - Part 3

Chapter Twenty

1 SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

Each country has its own terminology, but there is typically a high school exam, which is usually the last mandatory exam that school children have to take. It's usually for children between the age of 16 and 18, but it depends on the country. The secondary level sits between the primary school and the high school level. In the UK, this falls under the age category of 12-15 years old children. This is not the level where the child has to take the final exam, but rather the level where the child prepares for it. The secondary level is more about getting familiar with the high school level ideas and concepts and this is an interesting level.

Here the choices become more pronounced and the teaching becomes a bit more difficult than the previous levels. One option is to skip this level completely as the students do an easy version of the high school level and this gets repeated with some extra information every year. Skipping this part is not for everybody as it depends on the child's ability to grasp and understand the subjects. Parents can choose a variety of textbooks, revision material, online resources, and many more. There are also curricula available and these are flexible as well. At this stage, It is better to read the textbooks before buying them, as this is the age where issues which are un-Islamic tend to appear in textbooks like immorality.

Parents have to be really careful about the books that their children read in secondary school. The people who wrote these books may not have the same values that you do. Some of the more modern ones are very bad as they include things that a 12 year old is not supposed to read or see. It is up to the parents to speak to others and get advice on how to avoid such immoral aspects which are present in these books. On this point, some parents are of the approach that they should expose their children to a small amount of Haram, so that they do not go deep into it. This is from the greatest forms of misguidance. Allah never revealed something like this in the Quran, nor was it from the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ. Rather, doing such things can lead to more desires and could ultimately lead to Haram.

﴿مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ هَذِهِ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ﴾

“Allāh did not reveal any proof regarding this.”

Surah An-Najm: 23



Appropriate Approaches at Appropriate Times - Part 4

Chapter Twenty-one

4**SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL - CONTINUED**

If there is something the parents cannot avoid in regards to the curriculum, then they must make efforts to sit with the children and explain to them why it is wrong and what Islam says about it. For children of younger ages, parents can engage in a joyful manner ridiculing the issue. As for older children, parents need to be academic and make sure their children understand why Islam forbade such issues. An example of an unavoidable aspect in the curriculum is Darwin's Theory.

This theory has no base and it has no testing at all. Believing in Evolution leads to disbelief in Islam and there is consensus among the Ummah regarding this. If there is a question about the theory in the exam that the child cannot avoid, they can use phrases such as "As Darwin suggested," "According to Darwin," and so on which shall suffice the examiner. Darwin's Theory is minor and can be dealt with easily if the parents prepare their children beforehand. The dangerous part remains to be schools teaching secularism as the only way forward, rejecting the authority, and more which can cause huge issues. With homeschooling on the other hand, the children are protected and nurtured. There are a number of videos on the above topics such as Evolution being Haram and more. These discussions also pave the way for the children and parents to have a close relationship. Finally, Islam deals with every type of knowledge, which is necessary, in a beautiful and dignified way. So there is nothing wrong with introducing such topics to the children that need it.

Appropriate Approaches at Appropriate Times - Part 5

Chapter Twenty-two

5**HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL**

This level comes after the secondary school level and is usually the last exam that the parents can prepare their children for. Many students study by themselves for the high school exam level by using the available resources. From the very beginning, parents should encourage their children to learn independently so that they can gain this skill.

There are other children who need to be taught, if the parents feel that their level is only up to the secondary level. There are a lot of alternatives such as private tutoring, private schooling, and online resources and materials.

As a tip, one of the best ways to prepare for the exams is by solving the previous year's question papers. Preparing for an exam consists of two parts. The first being the content that needs to be studied, and the second is learning how to take exams by playing the system according to our advantage in a Halal way.

One of the ways in which the pressure can be reduced on the child is not attempting all the exams at once, but taking different exams in different months throughout the year if the country allows this. Another trick is to learn exam techniques. There are a lot of resources available online with regards to tips and tricks, various blueprints, mark schemes, and many more which makes studying for the exam easier for the child.

YouTube is a major resource for students wanting to learn how to study for exams. There are exam walkthroughs where a teacher is actually walking you through the exam. Revision books are also a great resource at this level.

Parents can give their children an amazing education with minimal time commitment in both the short and long term. The progress is exponential in the children's performance if they learn to make habits independently, and it is upon the parents to keep a close eye on the children when giving them their freedom.

Resources for Homeschooling

Chapter Twenty-three

1 ● Online Worksheets and Activities

The best way to find these online activities and worksheets is to look up “worksheets [Grade] [Country]” and there are a plethora of options. These are usually designed by professional teachers hence the resources are really good. Parents can remove any part that is irrelevant to the system they plan to implement according to their budget.

2 ● Online Videos

YouTube is the best platform to start with. It has a wide variety of content on almost all topics and one can find videos and playlists without music as well. There are also dedicated educational websites such as Khan Academy. Parents can have a look at these resources and add videos/playlists/channels to their children’s learning plan. It is also important to choose teachers who post quality content that the child is able to understand. There are also teachers who teach online for some money and this is also a great option.

3 ● Online Revision Sites

These websites mainly focus on the revision of the entire curriculum and they break it down into bite-size content. An example of that is the BBC in the UK, which is content-rich and highly reliable. Most of these revision guides can be found online and many of them are free.

4 ● Homeschooling Groups

There are a lot of forums, WhatsApp groups, and Telegram groups where parents communicate with other parents who are homeschooling. This is one of the ways through which parents can get new ideas, suggestions, and create long-time connections. There are also local homeschooling groups in the majority of countries.

5 ● After-School Classes

These are widely available and parents can send their children to these after-school classes to strengthen them in the subjects that they were not able to teach. This is way better than sending the children to school all day. These can also include weekend classes, activities, and various clubs for extracurricular activities.

6 ● Religious Support

It is really important to have the correct religious support. There are many options with regards to textbooks, but choosing the right set of books is the challenge. Parents should research and make sure to choose the right resources that will help the children understand and enjoy what they study at the same time. This is where support groups, forums, and connections come in handy.

7 ● Revision Books

These books are like revision guides in which the entire syllabus of a book is covered and they can be found online or in bookstores.

8 ● Past Papers

Ideally, it is better to have the previous papers of the same exam board which the child is following as these come in handy just before the exam. Parents can make the child solve these previous papers in order to get exposure to the real exam. These can be found online or in print.

9 ● Marking Schemes

Do get used to how the exam marking scheme works. Go through YouTube videos where they do a walk-through of the exam; they are very easy to understand. Once you practise using the marking schemes, you get used to what they mean. It is confusing in the beginning stages, but as time passes by, it becomes fairly easy to mark papers without any worries.

Integrating Islam Into Homeschooling

Chapter Twenty-four

This is a brief note on how to integrate Islam into your children's homeschooling. Learning Islam can be divided into two:

1 Curriculum

These include the obligatory acts of worship such as making Wudhu properly and knowing how to pray. One of the benefits of homeschooling is flexibility and parents can utilise that to set a time for teaching Islam on a regular basis. This should include the five pillars of Islam, the six pillars of Iman, inculcating the love for Allah and His messenger, and so on. Also, if the child starts fasting from a younger age, they will be used to fasting in the month of Ramadan when it becomes obligatory on them. Parents should also focus on memorisation because children are able to memorise better than adults; this is the correct time to make them embark on the journey of memorising the Quran.

2 Environment

In regards to the voluntary acts of learning Islam, then it is better for the parents to divide Islam into its different sciences and make sure the child completes a certain amount of content in each of the sciences. These sciences can include Seerah, Hadith, Tafsir, Arabic, and so on. Parents should make sure that the children understand what they memorise. They should also not force memorisation upon them. Parents must also focus on making the Arabic language a core subject as Islam revolves around the Arabic language. There are many institutes which can help with the child's Arabic fluency and Allah () will open doors as long as we are sincere and determined.

Allāh ﷺ says:

1

﴿ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ ﴾

“Be mindful of Allāh and Allāh will teach you”

Surah Al-Baqarah: 282

2

﴿ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ إِلَهًا يَجْعَلُ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا. وَيَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ﴾

“Whoever has taqwa of Allāh, Allāh will make him a way out and will provide for him from where he couldn't have imagined.”

Surah At-Talaq: 2



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